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Governor Bob McDonnell  
PO Box 1475  
Richmond, Virginia, 23218

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Dear Governor McDonnell,

I grew up on the south side of the James River between Boshers' Dam and William's Dam. When I was a child, the James was a mess, abused by Richmond, ignored by the Federal Government (this was a long time ago, before the Federal water pollution efforts of the 1970's). There were signs posted on the Southside advising citizens to stay out of the water for health reasons.

Look at Richmond now! The city boasts a nationally recognized river parks system. Environmental improvement has fostered economic development.

I have been following the Chesapeake Bay draft TMDL process with interest. I wanted to provide you with some citizen feedback regarding Virginia's response, the draft Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP).

I attended two of the public education sessions the EPA, the VA DEQ and the VA DCR held in October. From these I gather that Virginians support fishable and swimmable waters. Additionally, Virginians realize that arriving at that condition will not be easy.

The EPA has come up with a list of what they call "Federal backstops" to put into place if Virginia's WIP does not provide assurance that the nutrient loadings specified in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL are attained.

This Federal intervention will not be necessary with the exercise of your strong leadership before the upcoming General Assembly and your involvement with the final editing of Virginia's WIP.

I live in a region that has done little to help with the health of Virginia's waters. In Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission legislative packet, in years past we have urged the General Assembly not to consider extending the "Bay Act" here!

Make the extension of the Bay Act your first legislative priority and so state in the WIP. Turn your gaze to non-Tidewater communities located in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the 104 units of local government cited in the HJR 622 study (November, 2001). Welcome them to the honor and responsibility of being in the Bay watershed, extend the geographic reach of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.

Create a State program that tracks and rewards farmers when they install best management practices on their farms. The external cost of dumping tons of nutrients into the waters of

Virginia must be dealt with. It is not good business to destroy Virginia's aquaculture and Virginia's riverine recreational and tourism resources.

Encourage localities to implement storm-water utility fees based on permeability.

Please consider leading our localities and citizens. Make it clear to the people in the Bay watershed why you are asking them, in these difficult economic times, to step up.

At the education sessions I heard reference to many citizen ideas that came out of the "SAG" process (stakeholders advisory group meetings?) The commenter lamented that these proposals had not been included in the WIP. Where are those proposals? Promote specific actions in the WIP.

The economic impact of Federal backstops on citizens will be intense. But, with your leadership, the backstops can be avoided.

Ask Virginians to sacrifice. Direct the DCR to write a Watershed Implementation Plan that will get Virginia into the EPA's end-zone of "reasonable assurance".

We are about the same age. I know you remember Nixon going to China. President Nixon, flaws aside, was a pretty amazing President. Mr. Nixon started the EPA as well.

Please consider being the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the leader who makes plain the way for the other states and DC to reach this attainable goal of an actionable "pollution diet" for the Chesapeake Bay.

As called for in Virginia Code before you and I were born:

Virginia's 1950 State Water Control Law.

62.1-44.2. Short title; purpose.

The short title of this chapter is the State Water Control Law. It is the policy of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the purpose of this law to: (1) protect existing high quality state waters and restore all other state waters to such condition of quality that any such waters will permit all reasonable public uses and will support the propagation and growth of all aquatic life, including game fish, which might reasonably be expected to inhabit them; (2) safeguard the clean waters of the Commonwealth from pollution; (3) prevent any increase in pollution; (4) reduce existing pollution; (5) promote and encourage the reclamation and reuse of wastewater in a manner protective of the environment and public health; and (6) promote water resource conservation, management and distribution, and encourage water consumption reduction in order to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the present and future citizens of the Commonwealth.

Thanks for your service,

Bill Emory

cc: VA DCR